

South Kensington Museum
SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT

Box II, 97.E. OF THE
COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION.

Box 16.C3

135.4



NOTES

ON

THE NATIONAL ART LIBRARY,

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

No. 1. 1869.

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* * The Art Library is open daily during the same hours as the Museum: on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, from 10 to 4, 5, or 6, according to the season.

Museum tickets of admission include the Library, and are to be obtained at the catalogue sale stall, weekly, 6d.; monthly, 1s. 6d.; quarterly, 3s.; half-yearly, 6s.; yearly, 10s.

A complete Catalogue in MS. is accessible to all readers, and the Universal Catalogue of Art Books, as far as published, is on the table in the Reading Room. The attendants furnish the books required immediately on application, and information, such as may guide any one consulting the Library for a special subject, is to be obtained from the officer in charge.

The portfolios, and guard-books of engravings, and of photographs, can be examined on application; permission to copy in colours may be obtained by students; a copious index to the collection of photographs is printed; a printed list of the papers and periodicals received in the Library will be found on the tables in the Reading Room.

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Object and
scope of the
National Art
Library.

1. THE Art Library is, as its name implies, a special collection.

It is intended to contain all works relating to the fine arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting; all those that illustrate or can aid in the development of art applied to matters of personal or domestic use; books on the history of art and biography of artists, illuminated and illustrated books when of importance for art or its history, specimens of bookbinding and of typography, original designs, drawings, prints, and woodcuts, especially of ornamental art, photographs of objects of art, architecture, &c.

2. The object, therefore, defines the scope and limits of the Art Library, and thus it does not enter into rivalry with collections that aim at being universal, such as the library of the British Museum or the Bodleian at Oxford; it is intended, moreover, to be useful to those who are too little acquainted with books to gain much from ordinary libraries, but who can learn from illustrations bearing on the arts or trades with which they are familiar.

General nature
of contents.

3. Works of general reference, dictionaries of languages, of biography, chronology, genealogy, heraldry, are placed in the library, being required for reference by students and for the use of officers of the Department engaged in compiling catalogues, preparing labels, and other literary work of the Museum.

Various papers and serials, English and foreign, containing the current information of the day relating to art are taken in. Catalogues of exhibitions are preserved, and of sales of books and art objects—the latter with their prices recorded.

4. The collection of original designs and prints has for its primary object the instruction and aid of students of ornament; it therefore includes illuminations, drawings and sketches of objects of fine art, sometimes the original designs of eminent masters, and the working drawings from which goldsmith's and silversmith's work has been executed, designs for jewellers and watchmakers, for furniture, carving, ceilings, friezes, &c., also a large number of drawings of mosaics chiefly antique, of various architectural details as well as of completed buildings.

Among the prints book-ornament is especially represented, early woodcut illustrations, title pages, initial letters, &c., also the works of the 16th century, engravers of the German school called the "petits maîtres," and of the later French school of ornament.

5. A MS. catalogue of the books brought up to the latest Catalogues. acquisitions is available for the use of readers, together with a copious index classed in subjects. A catalogue of the collection of original drawings and designs, with a classed register added, is also available, and is about to be printed. A similar register of the prints is now complete down to the latest additions to the collection.

An alphabetical register of the photographs is printed, and as the collection is of great extent, this index to it may be regarded as forming a dictionary of objects of art with photographic illustrations of each.

6. A collection of books was commenced at Somerset House Formation of the Art Library. for the use of the students in the Government Schools of Design; this collection was augmented at Marlboro' House when the schools were transferred thither in 1852, formed into an Art Library, and opened to the public on payment of a small fee. In 1856 it was removed to South Kensington, the number of vols. then amounting to about 5,000.

The Library has since been gradually rendered available to larger numbers of readers, and has been increased to its present extent, partly by gifts from private persons; by contributions from foreign governments (such as that of the series of plates forming the great work known as the "Iconographie du Louvre"); by the bequest of the late Rev. Chauncy H. Townshend, and by the annual expenditure of the Parliamentary vote of a small sum included in the estimates for the Department.

The rarity of some art books has delayed or hindered their acquisition, but the most common difficulty has been the cost, which, in the case of many of the books which come within the scope of the collection, is considerable. These, some of which are often asked for, are being purchased by degrees as the amount of the Library funds will permit.

PRESENT CONTENTS OF THE LIBRARY.

			Summary of contents.
7. The number of volumes and pamphlets at present in the Art Library is upwards of	-	25,000	
Of original drawings and designs	-	8,000	
Of illuminations	-	600	
Of engravings	-	21,000	
Of photographs	-	35,000	

8. The following alphabetical enumeration of the principal Classification classes of books represented in the Art Library, and of of contents.

objects illustrated by engravings, &c., will enable readers to form a correct judgment of the nature of its contents:—

ACADEMIES OF FINE ART:

Handbooks to, catalogues, illustrations of the contents of.

ALPHABETS AND WRITING:

Alphabets of various languages, initial letters, ornamental writing, &c.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY:

Artistic anatomy, human and comparative.

ANTIQUITIES:

Primæval, and of all countries, both in ancient and mediæval times.

ARCHITECTURE:

Of all countries and periods; its theory and practice (illustrations by means of drawings, engravings, and photographs).

ARMOUR:

Illustrations of, by engravings and photographs.

ART:

Technical works on the practice of;
Theory of;
History of;
Books on systematic instruction in, with examples.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Works of reference on.

BIOGRAPHY:

General, for reference; special biographies of artists.

BOOKBINDING:

Examples of ornamental (exhibited in the Art Museum).

BOTANY:

Artistic illustrations of.

BRASSES, MONUMENTAL:

Illustrations of, by engravings, &c., collection of rubbings from.

BUILDING:

Methods and contrivances; details for joiners, glaziers, plasterers, &c.

CARPENTRY, CABINET-MAKING, CARVING :

Works on the practice of, and illustrations of.

*CHINA, see PORCELAIN.**CIPHERS, see MONOGRAMS.**CLOCKS AND WATCHES :*

Illustrations of, designs for details of ornament of.

COINS AND MEDALS :

History of, in all countries ;

Illustrations of.

CONCHOLOGY :

Artistic illustrations of.

COSTUME :

Manners and customs : illustrations by means of original drawings, prints, and photographs.

COTTAGE-ARCHITECTURE :

Illustrations of ; designs and plans for.

DECORATION :

Of building, furniture, and miscellaneous objects.

DICTIONARIES AND CYCLOPEDIAS :

Of language for reference, glossaries of art-terms.

DRAWING AND PERSPECTIVE :

Systems of teaching, illustrations of practice.

ENGRAVING AND ETCHING :

History of ;

Illustrations of various schools of.

ENTOMOLOGY :

Artistic illustrations of.

FURNITURE :

Decorative, descriptions and illustrations of.

GALLERIES, MUSEUMS, ACADEMIES :

Handbooks to ; and Catalogues, illustrations of their contents by means of engravings and photographs.

GARDENS :

Designs for laying out.

GEM-ENGRAVING :

History and illustrations of.

GEOMETRY:

Practical, as applied to art.

GLASS-PAINTING:

Theory and practice of;

History of;

Illustrations of existing works by drawings and coloured engravings.

GOLDSMITHS' WORK:

Illustrations of; designs for.

HERALDRY:

History and practice of;

Illustrations of crests, seals, monograms, &c.

ILLUMINATION OF BOOKS:

Practice of;

Illustrations and examples of.

JEWELLERY:

Illustrations of, designs for.

MANUFACTURES:

Machinery, philosophical instruments;

Textiles, carpets, floor-cloths, &c.;

Upholstery, glass, bronze, &c.

*MEDALS, see COINS.**MINERALOGY:*

Artistic illustration of.

MONOGRAMS AND CIPHERS:

Principles of;

Illustrations of.

MONUMENTS:

Sepulchral and other illustrations of, and designs for.

MOSAIC DECORATION:

Illustrations of.

NATURAL HISTORY:

As applied to art and as illustrated by art, zoology, botany, and mineralogy.

ORGANS AND OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS:

Illustrations of;

Designs for.

PAGEANTS AND PROCESSIONS:

Illustrations of.

PAINTING :

Theory, practice, and history of.

PAPER-STAINING :

Designs for.

PERIODICALS :

(See printed list in reading room.)

POTTERY AND PORCELAIN :

History and manufacture of ;

Illustrations of, in drawings, engravings, and photographs.

PRINTING :

History and practice of ;

Examples and illustrations of.

SCULPTURE AND GEM-ENGRAVING :

Theory, practice, and history of, including medals, coins, &c. ;

Illustrations of galleries and collections of.

TOPOGRAPHY :

Including illustrated and other guides to remarkable places, buildings, monuments, &c.

VASES :

Designs for.

WRITING, see ALPHABETS.

WOOD-ENGRAVING :

History of ;

Examples of ;

Early book ornament, &c.

9. From the above statement and classification it will be seen that the Art Library is intended for the use of artists in all branches of Fine Art, whether architects, sculptors, painters, designers of ornament, herald painters, engravers, &c., who may find in the collections of drawings, engravings, and photographs, and in illustrated books, records and examples of what has been done by their predecessors. It is also intended for the use of all persons engaged in trades in which art is or might be an element, such as jewellers, watch-makers, bookbinders, printers, &c. ; also of writers on art and students of art history, art biography, topography, costume, &c. ; lastly, with a view to facilitate the work of students

Use of the
Library.

and of others engaged in the preparation of catalogues, labels, and various illustrations of art objects, works of reference bearing more or less directly on art, or necessary for consultation, are included within the scope of the Library.

It is scarcely necessary to enlarge upon the practical benefit derivable from the varied contents of an illustrated Library by that large class of artisans whose work touches on the confines of fine art, and who because they are unacquainted with what has been done by their predecessors, want that knowledge to move them to higher aims than the mere routine of their respective trades.

The tedious and imperfect realization of the ideas which occur to them will often be stimulated to successful growth and matured to practical results by the study of the treasures laid up in collections of original designs and illustrated books. New regions of thought will be thus opened to many whose education has been nipped by the immediate necessity of bread-earning, and whose life has been spent hitherto without access to the splendid and costly works which are now within their reach in the Art Library.

The decorator who can refer to the drawings of Chambers, Adam, &c., or to the designs of workmen like Chippendale and Locke, or of artists like Flaxman and Stothard, may make a stride in advance of his competitors. The stock in trade, so to speak, of various artists in ornament is laid up in books, and such books are being acquired, whenever it is possible, for the Art Library. To those unacquainted with them and with collections of prints, it is hard to realize the wealth of material suggestive not alone to artists but to artisans, thus preserved and ready at hand to arouse invention and economize labour.

The amount of such matter that can be brought together in a special library is not to be measured by the number of volumes it contains when compared with general collections. 50,000 published books may suffice for the scope of an Art Library. But in a collection that has defined limits a certain degree of completeness may be hoped for, and facility of reference retained which would be impossible amidst an overwhelming mass of material.

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For Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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